

Grace Notes March 2020



GRACE EVANGELICAL LUTHERAN CHURCH

351 Greenwood St

(across from the borough park) Hop Bottom, Pa. 18824-9728

(570) 289-4468 (fax & phone) Preschool 4921 hbgrace@echoes.net

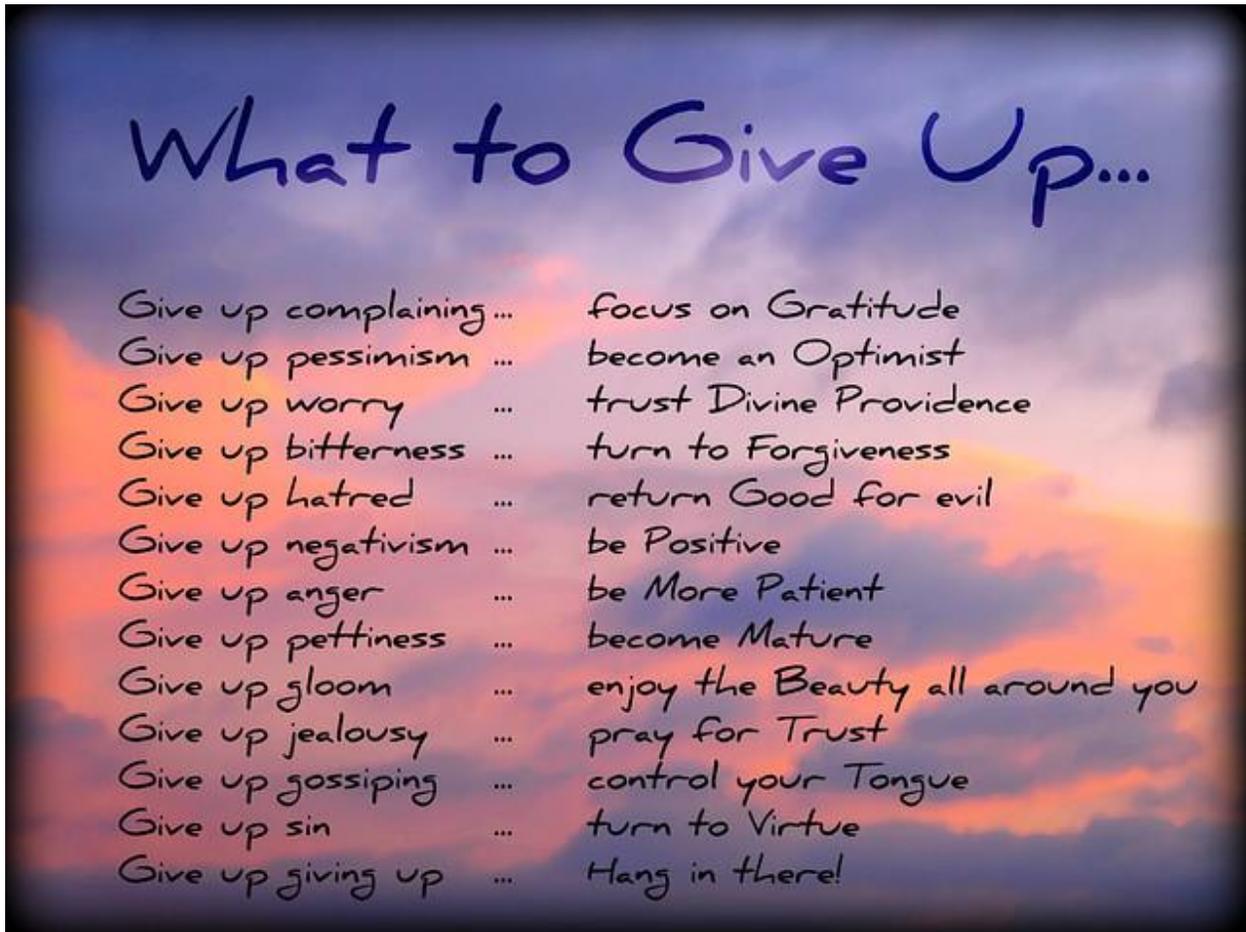
Worship: Sunday at 10:00 am

Adult Bible Class: 8:45 am. **Sunday School** 9:00

Preschool: Runs from September through May for the 3-year-old and pre-kindergarten children. Call for more details. 289-4921 Find us on Facebook or our website: grace-lutheran-church.net

Webpage: www.grace-lutheran-church.net

Prayer requests: prayer.requests.grace@gmail.com

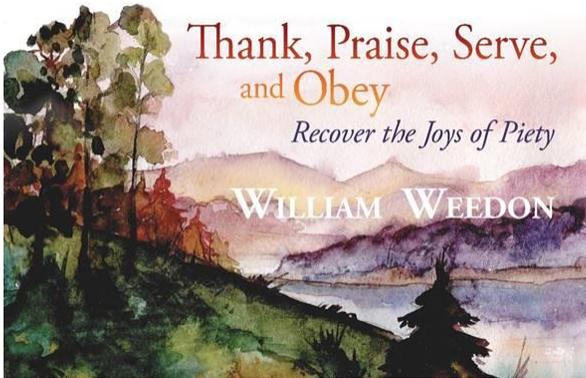


SEASON OF LENT

SOMETHING TO THINK ABOUT

NEWS AND NOTES

Items of interest or news about members and friends in our community. If you have any news please get it to the church office so that it can be shared



Starting on Wed. the 4th, there will be a special Bible Class every Wed. of Lent at St. Paul, Tunkhannock led by Pastor Kim Bode. It begins with a light supper at 6 p.m. It is based on a book and offers help in living our life for the Lord. Carpooling can be arranged, and the Bodes have room!

There is a sign up sheet in the back of the church

Ken Corbin is recovering at home from a heart attack .Dawn is recovering from a shoulder injury. Alicia is there to help.

Mary Niederberger thanks all for their prayers and cards. They are really appreciated.

Alicia Belch, Joshua Griffiths, and Deb and Paul Belch would like to thank our church family for their generous gifts, thoughts & prayers, and presence at the shower if you were able to attend.

We are truly grateful and would appreciate your continued prayers. All is well, and the nursery is ready and waiting. God Bless You and thank you again.

The following is a letter received by some regarding Camp Pioneer. Some have mentioned that they did not know of these problems and the decision to close the Camp. The following is the original letter and a follow-up of this letter. There is continued discussion so I will keep everyone updated in the following newsletters.

January 17, 2020

**MESSAGE TO THE EASTERN DISTRICT
OF THE LUTHERAN CHURCH-MISSOURI SYNOD
FROM THE BOARD OF DIRECTORS OF
PIONEER CAMP AND RETREAT CENTER, INC.**

With great regret, the Board of Directors of Pioneer Camp and Retreat Center, Inc. wishes to advise the Board of Directors and the officers of the Eastern District of the Lutheran Church - Missouri Synod, the member churches of the Eastern District, and the general church membership that, as a result of the deteriorating financial condition at Camp Pioneer, it is unlikely that the camp will operate in 2021, and it is all but certain that the camp will run significantly reduced operations in 2020.

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As many of you are aware, the financial condition of Camp Pioneer has been on a downward trajectory for several years. The factors causing this include increased costs of operations, in particular summer camp, and the inability to increase camp revenue to match such costs; decreasing camp attendance; increased employee expenditures due to minimum wage obligations; decreased giving to camp; inability to raise funds for necessary capital improvements resulting in needing to make such improvements from operating income; inability to amortize long term debt of the camp; and exhaustion of avenues of raising capital financing.

The board further regretfully advises that given the current precarious financial situation at Camp Pioneer, it is very possible that the board will have to consider a disposition of the camp property at the end of 2020 in order to pay its long term obligations. After payment of the camp's obligations, the net proceeds of sale would revert to the Eastern District.

The board further advises that it has accepted the resignation of Alex Knowles as Executive Director of Pioneer Camp and Retreat Center, Inc., effective January 20, 2020. The board is grateful for Alex's devoted service, and that of his wife Sue and their children, to Camp Pioneer and to the people of the Eastern District and of western New York generally. Alex will continue to work with camp in a voluntary capacity for a period of time. Alex says, "Sue and I and our family cherish the opportunity that we have had to work in the outstanding Christian ministry that is Camp Pioneer. While we have determined that at this point in our lives new opportunities beckon, we are and always will be devoted to Camp Pioneer, and I will continue to support Camp Pioneer on a voluntary basis and assist the camp in moving forward."

The board has appointed Brian Sreniawski, currently the General Manager of Pioneer Camp and Retreat Center, Inc., as Interim Executive Director, effective January 20, 2020. Brian has been in his current role of General Manager since June 2019, prior to which he spent fifteen months as a manager in the hospitality industry, four and half years as Youth Director at St. John's in Orchard Park, NY, and two years at Camp Pioneer as Summer Program Director. Brian has worked closely with Alex and is intimately familiar with all aspects of camp operations. The board is confident that Brian can steward the camp in these difficult times.

We understand you may have questions, some of which we may be able to answer. If you desire to speak to someone about the status of Camp Pioneer feel free to call Camp Pioneer at (716) 549-1420.

FOLLOW UP LETTER:

CAMP PIONEER UPDATE FROM THE PIONEER BOARD OF DIRECTORS AND LEADERSHIP OF PIONEER AND THE EASTERN DISTRICT

Brothers and Sisters in Christ,

Many have been working on matters regarding the status of Camp Pioneer in Angola, NY in light of the notification sent by email January 17, 2020. That was the first announcement stating Camp Pioneer is unlikely to operate in 2021, and that the camp will run significantly reduced operations in 2020.

All involved are striving to assure a 2020 season that is as positive an experience as is Camp's proud reputation. Here is the latest news.

1. Brian Sreniawski is the Interim Camp Director. Brian first worked at Pioneer for two years as Program Director prior to four years as Youth Director at St. John in Orchard Park, NY. After a year of hotel experience, he returned to Pioneer in 2019. Brian is working hard to ensure ***Pioneer will honor its obligations for weddings, retreats, and profitable camps through the end of 2020.***

2. The Pioneer Board of Directors determined to complete the 2020 season, and it continues to assess the business and trends of recent years, the current financial situation and future possibilities. Although no decision has been formally made regarding the future after 2020, no plan is in place at this time for 2021, and ***all indications are that Camp Pioneer will cease operations at the end of the 2020 season.***

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3. At its meeting in February, the Board of Directors of the Eastern District expressed deep appreciation to the Pioneer Board of Directors for their exceptional efforts to maintain Camp **with support for the rationale and actions of the Camp Board leading to the likely closure of the Camp.**

4. We see a groundswell among Pioneer alumni, supporters and donors responding to the January announcement of Pioneer's impending closure. It manifests in **gestures of encouragement and financial support.** The need is very significant, and even growing such gestures to the scale of "miracle" would require a reinvention of Pioneer for operations to be sustainable; and it must happen soon, or closure is no less inevitable.

5. Looking to the future, we will engage the services of a consultant to help leadership and stakeholders consider two questions with the goals of answering the question of closure or reinvention, and presenting a complete and comprehensive view of the future, no matter the conclusions:

1. First, what is the **purpose of Pioneer** if not the traditional camp ministry situated in Angola, NY?
2. Second, what is the **vision for the property** in Angola, NY?
3. A subsequent question: Is there way to create a new Pioneer concept, a legacy, that extends the **"Pioneer experience"** in perpetuity?

6. **We thank everyone** for your kind words of support, prayers, and encouragement during these difficult days of uncertainty. All involved are prayerfully striving to discern God's will for the Pioneer ministry that has touched so many lives for 75 years. We acknowledge that since the first notification in January, considerable discussion among you, among friends, in churches and meetings, and over social media has resulted. We recognize many are grieving the news of likely closing Camp at the end of 2020 and we laud your hope and efforts to avoid what seems at this time to be an inevitable outcome.

7. More updates will follow as information is available.



PRESIDENTS CORNER

We were certainly thankful for Visiting Pastors filling in during the month of February. Pastor Emberger from Christ Memorial, Malvern PA was with us on February 2 and 9 and Pastor Bode did the Ash Wednesday service at 1:00 PM with Holy Communion and ashes. Pastor Hofmeister from Christ Memorial, Malvern, PA will be our visiting Pastor on March 1 and 22 and we will have Holy Communion both Sundays. The other three Sundays of March will be filled by lay people. If you would like to volunteer, we will provide a sermon that you can read.

We continued the process of looking for a Called Pastor. Pastor Richert, our Circuit Visitor, joined us for a congregational call meeting on February 23 to present the two candidates to the congregation. At that meeting a vote, requiring a 2/3 majority of those in attendance, was taken to select a candidate for the Call. Pastor Anglin from Amityville, NY received the required majority and a subsequent vote made it unanimous. I called Pastor Anglin after the vote and he said he was looking forward to receiving the Call papers. Another meeting of the Call Committee will be necessary to fill out the papers, which are quite lengthy [11 pages].

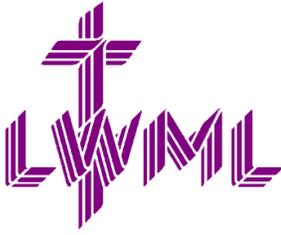
Pastor Bode and I attended a meeting at Our Savior Mt Pocono, PA . It was led by Dr. Wicher, Eastern district President and the president of the SELC. It was a very informative discussion of the shortage of pastors and the need to consider partnerships. An additional meeting with Pastor Wicher in attendance will be scheduled in the future. I will attending the Presidents Meeting on March 14 at Faith Easton.

Parsonage renovation work is continuing with a contractor working on the new kitchen and ½ bath [see the Trustees report]. The Pastor we are calling prefers a parsonage rather than owning his own home.

We could still use additional cash in the Emergency Fund. This fund is used to help those with a financial problem such as a heating bill or a medical emergency. Please consider making a contribution to this fund.

Your support for Grace Lutheran is always appreciated. Let's all show up at Grace every Sunday to show our support for our Church.

Rich Niederberger, Council President



WOMEN'S GUILD NEWS & NOTES

The February meeting was cancelled due to a funeral.
The next meeting will be March 7 at 10:15.
They will be discussing the new appliances for the parsonage



THE EGG HUNT IS COMING.

Mark your calendars for Saturday, April 11 for our 17th Annual Easter Egg Hunt! Boxes will be in the back of the church for your donations of wrapped Easter Candy (small enough to fit into plastic eggs). Eggs will also be available in the back of the church by the middle of March for your "detaping" pleasure. Please take a bag, detape the eggs, and return to church by Sunday, April 5. Feel free to throw away any damaged or non-matched halves We'll meet in the Fellowship Hall on Tuesday, April 7 at 5:00 to stuff eggs and enjoy a light supper together.

The Egg Hunt will be on Saturday, April 11 beginning at 10:00. Thanks again to the congregation for their support of this outreach to our preschool and community.

Anne Bode

PRESCHOOL NEWS

Valentine's day parties were a big hit. I was able to see the end of the four-year-old's party with all the excitement.

We are taking 2020-2021 applications from students in school now. After the 26th we will open to the public. We have four requests for the three-four year-old class and seven requests for the four-five-year-old class. We need 12 to fill the three-four-year-old class and 15 for the four-five-year-old class.



We are still working on ideas for the spring fundraiser. The four-five year-old class will have a field trip to Nicholson for bowling later in the year. We have to arrange time and parent transportation to do this.

The school year should end the end of May if no weather conditions become an unwelcome surprise!

Thanks to all who help with funding to keep our preschool going.
Paulette Adams, Administrator

GRACE CONGREGATIONAL MEETING FEBRUARY 23, 2020

Present: There were 24 members present including council members listed: Rich Niederberger, Lynn & Paulette Adams, Lorraine Stanton, Diane Nowalk, Anne Bode, Patti Barankovich, Marie Doty, Marty Klees, Meg Klees, Stan & Dorothy Klees.

Rich Niederberger called the meeting to order led us in prayer.



Minutes of the January council meeting were read by Meg Klees. A motion was made to accept the minutes as read, seconded and motion carried.

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There were no new members.

Treasurer's Report: Stan Klees distributed his report. Some figures were discussed particularly funds used to renovate the parsonage. Motion made to accept the treasurer's report, seconded and motion carried.

Pastor's Report: No report.

Elders Report: No report was made since there has not been a meeting.

Worship Committee: No report made but Rich Niederberger noted that the Ash Wednesday service will be at 1:00 on February 26, 2020, conducted by Pastor Bode.

Trustees Report: Lynn Adams reported for the trustees. Phil Hodges has completed the demolition of the kitchen and half bath in the parsonage. He has installed some stud walls where there were none. Added insulation and put up sheet rock and started spackling. It was suggested that someone ensure that the vent outside for the microwave is in place. Lynn asked Phil to leave a space for a dishwasher. The flooring will be the same throughout the kitchen and entry and half bath. New doors will be installed for the half bath, office turned laundry room and basement. The kitchen door will not be added since it was determined to not be used much. Phil assured Lynn that his workers will clean upstairs and down since the plastic barriers put up did not keep the areas clean. Phil will install the appliances if they are available when the kitchen is ready.. Motion was made to purchase appliances consisting of stove, refrigerator, dishwasher and microwave, from Nicholson Lumber, since they are good about servicing them. Motion seconded and passed. Diane Nowalk volunteered the Women's Guild to meet to select these items. If an LP stove is desired, a tank will need to be ordered. Stan Klees stated that once the contractor has completed the work volunteers will meet four days a week and get the project completed.

Financial Secretary: No report.

Sunday School Superintendent: Meg Klees stated that she had no report.

Summer Lunch Box: No report requested.

Stewardship Committee: Anne Bode stated she had no report.

Evangelism Committee: Donna Tugend stated she had no report.

Women's Guild: Diane Nowalk reported for the group. The meeting was cancelled yesterday due to a funeral. The next meeting will be March 7th at 10:15. The group will discuss the new appliances for the parsonage.

Youth Report: No report.

Christian Education Report: No report.

Administrator of Day School: Paulette Adams reported that the checking account balance as of February 10, was \$12,618.66. Donations from the congregation and one community family were \$1255. Paulette stated that these funds are much appreciated, since we have fewer classes. Registration for next year has begun. Current registrations for next school year is: Four three-year-olds with room for 12; Seven four-year-olds with room for 15. There will be no hoagie sale as a fundraising event. The fundraiser has not yet been determined. The four-year-old class does not have a scheduled date for bowling yet.

Unfinished Business: Rich Niederberger noted that arranging hospital visits still needs to be established. Pastor DeYoung visited a member, recently hospitalized, since Pastor Zimmerman was away.

New Business: Rich Niederberger stated that a committee needs to be set up to audit the books. Ron Schoner and Paulette Adams volunteered. Ann Corbin will be contacted to see if she will volunteer also. Rich Niederberger stated that the church's constitution does not have a provision for absentee ballots and that a 2/3 vote of members present at the call meeting is required to make a call. Pastor Bode and Rich attended an Eastern District Congregational Presidents meeting held at Our Savior in Mt. Pocono. There was significant participation by members of SELC. Both Rich and Pastor talked about topics discussed at this meeting. Rich reminded us that newsletter items are needed by Wednesday, February 26th.

The next council meeting will be Friday, March 13, 2020, at 11:00.

A motion made to adjourn the meeting, seconded and motion carried. The meeting closed with the Lord's Prayer. Respectfully submitted, Dorothy Klees, Secretary

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GRACE CONGREGATIONAL CALL MEETING – February 23, 2020

Present: There were 30 members present including council members listed: Rich Niederberger, Lynn & Paulette Adams, Lorraine Stanton, Diane Nowalk, Anne Bode, Patti Barankovich, Marie Doty, Marty Klees, Meg Klees, Anne Corbin, Nancy Shoemaker, Stan & Dorothy Klees, along with Pastor Peter Richert.

Rich Niederberger called the meeting to order. Pastor Richert led us in prayer.

Pastor Richert spoke regarding the call process by following an agenda and provided a Pastor's perspective in the process.

Rich Niederberger stated that our church's constitution did not provide for absentee ballots and that 2/3 of the members attending were required to issue a call for a candidate. The list of members attending is attached.

The call list was distributed. Motion made to accept the call list, seconded, and motion passed. Pastor Richert discussed ballpark salary expectations along with retirement, health insurance, auto/mileage expenses, continuing education/library and housing considerations. Rich Niederberger spoke for the call committee. The list of likely candidates was reduced to two: Pastor David Anglin from New York and Pastor Benjamin Hertel from Indiana. The others eliminated for a variety of reasons including one who had already accepted a call and those who preferred an urban setting. The congregation thanked the committee for their work.

Pastor Richert led us in prayer regarding the ballot established. The ballots were cast and counted. Pastor Anglin received 20 votes and Pastor Hertel received 10 votes. Motion made motion to extend the call to Pastor Anglin, and seconded. There was one opposing vote. The motion carried. A motion was made to invite Pastor Anglin for a visit with the congregation covering his expenses. This motion was seconded and the motion passed. Rich Niederberger and Pastor Richert will make a phone call to Pastor Anglin to extend the call offer.

Pastor Richert offered prayer and the members joined with him in the singing of the doxology.

Rich Niederberger closed the meeting.

Respectfully submitted, Dorothy Klees, Secretary with Mary Niederberger

EXCITING MISSION TRIP TO CANADA



The organization LAMP (Lutheran Association of Missionary Pilots) conducts Vacation Bible Schools in some of the remote areas of Canada. This, week long, venture is an opportunity to teach children the Gospel and the truths of scripture. I, and some other members of Grace, have expressed an interested to go along with a team of people from another Eastern District congregation. Their week is the first one in August. We would probably leave August 1st and return on August 9th. It looks like we might need to do some fundraising. Let me know if interested. Kim Bode

MARCH CELEBRATIONS

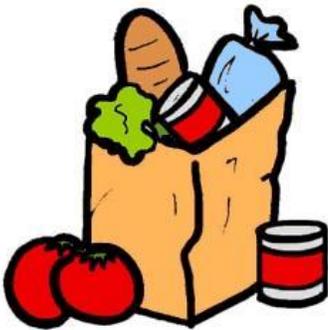
BIRTHDAYS



- 5 Louise Knaurer
- 8 William Mead
- 12 William Zick
- 15 Rich Niederberger
- 16 Emily Stankiewicz
- 18 Frank Novitch Jr.



No March Anniversaries



SUMMER LUNCH BOX PROGRAM

INFORMATION REGARDING THE 2019 SLB PROGRAM YEAR:

- The Program served 199 children of 73 families. Most of these were within the MVSD.
- During mid-summer, we were informed of needy families in the Choconut/Friendsville areas. As a result we served an additional 9 needy families with 26 children from that area for the remainder of the 2019 season.
- Total costs for foodstuffs for the 2019 season were about \$19,650.00.
- Among the interesting statistics for the 2019 Program year: We distributed 486 dozen eggs, 1084 cans of fruit, 1002 containers of pasta sauce,

1002 containers of pasta, 1052 cans of of tuna.

Anticipated updates for the 2020 season:

- We will be utilizing the Grace Lutheran Church facilities for the 10th consecutive year for distributing to the MVSD area families.
- May 30th will be the chicken barbecue fundraiser at the Lenox V.F.W. Post at Lenox Corners. There will be 50/50 drawings, basket raffles, a bake sale as well as the popular gun raffle. Contributions for the basket raffle are always welcome.
- The Newmann Hall Center in Choconut will be the distribution site for needy families of the Friendsville, Choconut, Little Meadows areas for the season.
- A new distribution site for Montrose area families will be the Montrose V.F.W. This group is also planning a Sept. 19th chicken barbecue, golf tournament, basket raffle, bake sale and gun raffle. They are already supported by the Montrose Lions Club, St. Paul's Episcopal Church and Kiwanis Club.
- The Elk Lake School has agreed to utilize their high school for a distribution site this summer. The American Legion has already donated to the SLB and offered to do some type of fund raising as well as assisting in the actual distribution.
- Summer Lunch Box is now a 501c(3) organization. That is we are now registered with the Commonwealth of PA as a non-profit group.
- For those who may wish to use it, our E.I. number (tax exemption) is: **84-2249142**.
- SLB is also considering a couple designs to choose a logo for the group. This is a work in progress.
- 2019 books were audited recently and found in compliance with bank records.

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As you can see this will be a very busy season for Summer Lunch Box. Additional help is always appreciated, whether for a week or 2 or the entire season. Please watch here for additional updates.

Respectfully submitted, Lorraine Stanton

Trustees report:

Work is progressing on the parsonage renovation. All demo is completed and a recent check in with Mr. Hodges reported the drywall installed, spackled and in process of being primed and painted by the end of this week. During demo it was discovered the three rooms, kitchen, half bath and utility room lacked insulation in the ceilings and exterior walls of kitchen and half bath. The contractor has studded walls that had none and insulated all areas. The water lines and drains for the washer, laundry sink and 220 electric for the dryer and exhaust for same have been installed in the former office which will now be a laundry room. The half bath has a new commode, installed to code, a vanity with sink, light and mirror, and a new overhead light and exhaust fan installed. The door to the cellar, half bath and utility room will be replaced. It was decided to purchase appliances needed now instead of at a later date so the contractor can install them for us. Diane Nowalk, Anne Bode and woman's guild will source and choose the appliances needed. Stan Klees and i have been observing the work in progress and we are pleased with the quality of workmanship being accomplished. Flooring in the foyer, half bathroom, kitchen, and utility room, as well as, cupboard installation remains to be done to complete this part of the renovation.



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Those serving for the month:

Counters

March 1 Mary & Rich Niederberger
 8 Anna Aten & Diane Nowalk
 15 Stan & Dorothy Klees
 22 Carolyn Loch and Betty Santamour
 29 Mary & Rich Niederberger

Greeters

March 1 Marie Doty
 8 Betty Santamour
 15 Jennie Stuble
 23 Louise Knauer
 29 Marie Doty

Bulletin Run-Off

March 1 Stan Klees
 8 Harold & Debbie Wheeland
 15 Art & Eileen Gundell
 22 Stan Klees
 29 Harold & Debbie Wheeland

Acolytes

March 1 Madison Belotti
 8 Madison Belotti
 15 Madison Belotti
 22 Delany Hollenbeck
 29 Madison Belotti

Organists

March 1 Patti Barankovich
 8 Eileen Gundell
 15 Patti Barankovich
 22 Eileen Gundell
 29 Eileen Gundell

Alter

Art & Eileen Gundell